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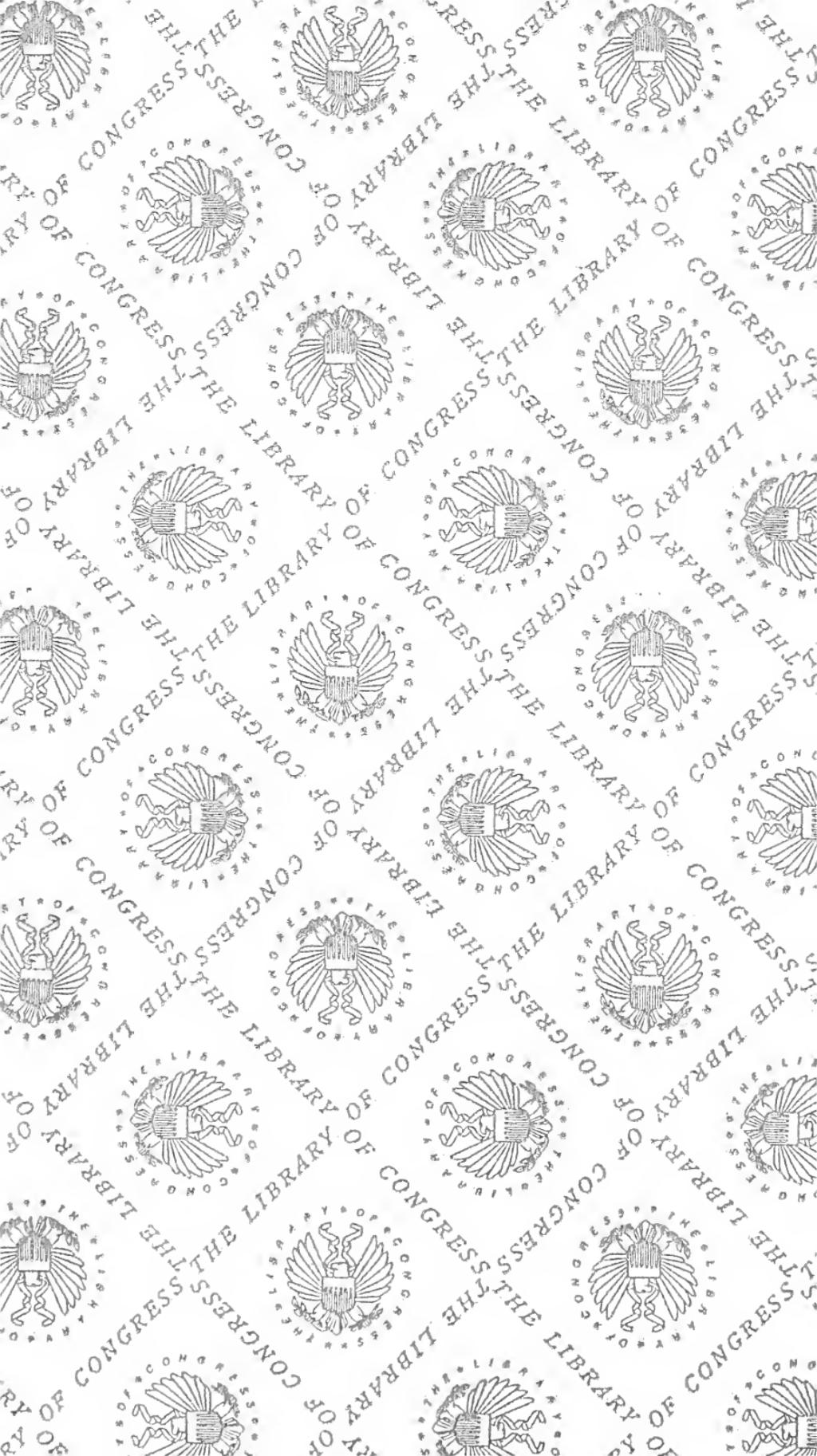
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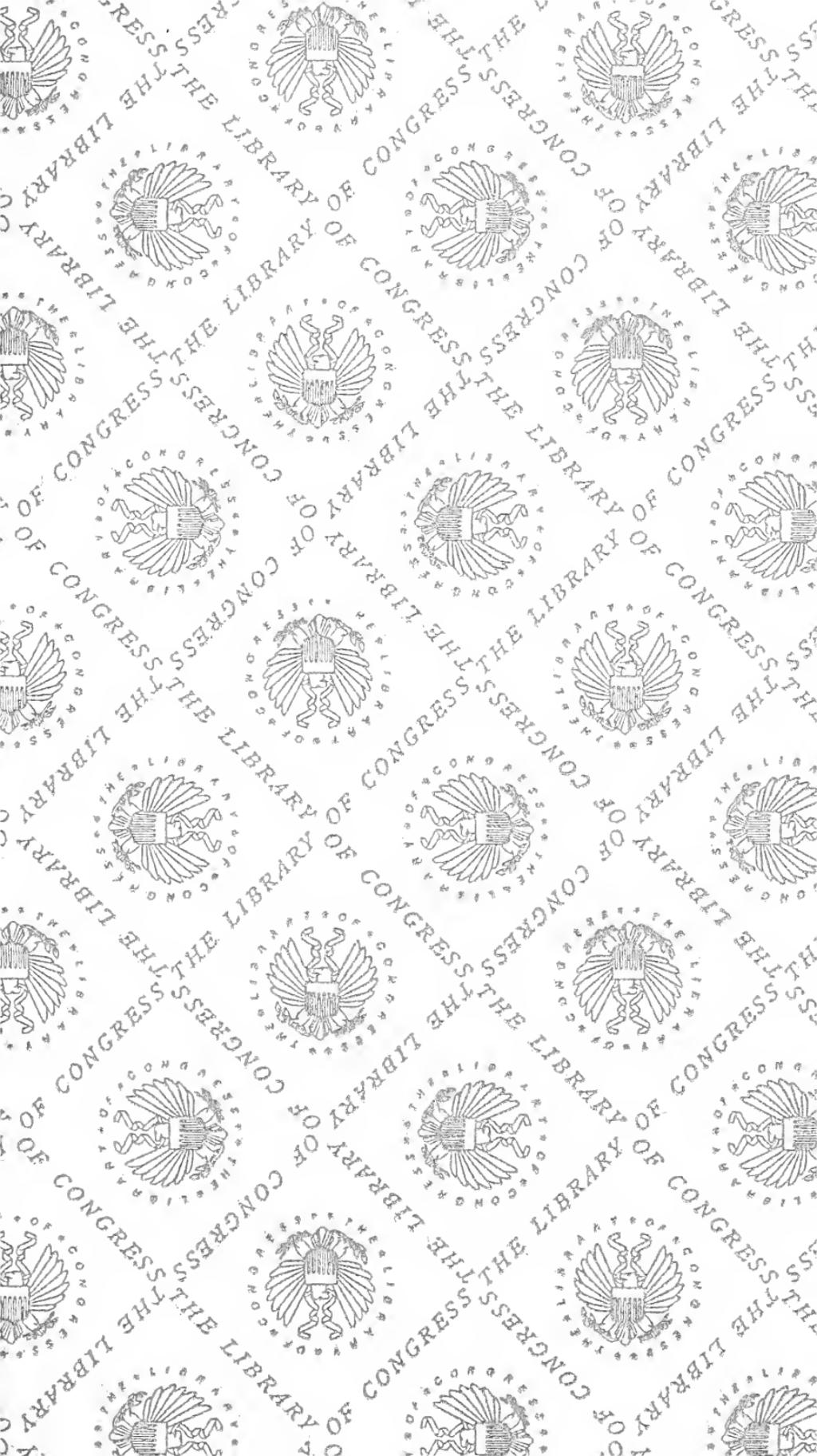
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## **THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL**



# THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

By

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN



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## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

**W**HAT is the value of an ideal?

Have you ever attempted to estimate its worth? Have you ever tried to measure its value in dollars and cents? If you would know the pecuniary value of an ideal, go into the home of some man of great wealth who has an only son; go into that home when the son has gone downward in a path of dissipation until the father no longer hopes for his reform, and then ask the father what an ideal would have been worth that would have made a man out of his son instead of a wreck. He will tell you that all the money that he has

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or could have he would gladly give for an ideal of life that would turn his boy's steps upward instead of downward.

An ideal is above price. It means the difference between success and failure—the difference between a noble life and a disgraceful career, and it sometimes means the difference between life and death. Have you noticed the increasing number of suicides? I speak not of those sad cases in which the reason dethroned leaves the hand no guide, but rather of those cases, increasing in number, where the person who takes his life finds nothing worth living for. When I read of one of these cases I ask myself whether it is not caused by a false ideal of life. If one measures life by what others do for him he is apt to be disappointed, for people are

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not likely to do as much for him as he expects. One of the most difficult things in life is to maintain the parity between one's opinion of his own merits and the opinion that others have of him. If, I repeat, a man measures life by what others do for him, he is apt to be disappointed, but if he measures life by what he does for others, there is no time for despair. If he measures life by its accumulations, these usually fall short of his expectations, but if he measures life by the contribution which he makes to the sum of human happiness, his only disappointment is in not finding time to do all that his heart prompts him to do. Whether he spends his time trying to absorb from the world, only to have the burden of life grow daily heavier, or spends his time in an effort to accom-

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plish something of real value to the race, depends upon his ideal.

The ideal must be far enough above us to keep us looking upward to it all the time, and it must be far enough in advance of us to keep us struggling toward it to the end of life. It is a very poor ideal that one ever fully realizes, and it is a great misfortune for one to overtake his ideal, for, when he does, his progress ceases. I was once made an honorary member of a class and asked to suggest a class motto. I suggested "Ever-Green" and some of the class did not like it. They did not like to admit that they ever had been green, not to speak of always being green. But it is a good class motto because the period of greenness is the period of growth. When we cease to be green and are entirely ripe we are

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ready for decay. I like to think of life as a continual progress toward higher and better things—as a continual unfolding. There is no better description of a really noble life than that given in Holy Writ where Solomon speaks of the path of the just as “like the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

The ideal is permanent; it does not change. Therefore it is so important that the ideal shall be a worthy one. I speak as a parent to parents, and teachers will endorse what I say, when I declare that one of the most important things in dealing with the young is to get the person to take firm hold of a high ideal. Give one food and he will hunger again; give him clothing and his clothing will wear out, but give him a high ideal and that ideal will be with him

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through every waking hour, lifting him to a higher plane in life and giving him a broader conception of his relations to his fellows. Plans may change; circumstances will change plans. Each one of us can testify to this. Even ambitions change, for circumstances will change ambitions. If you will pardon a reference to my own case, I have had three ambitions —two so far back that I can scarcely remember them—and one so recent that I can hardly forget it. My first ambition was to be a Baptist preacher. When I was a small boy, if anybody asked me what I intended to be, I always replied: "A Baptist preacher"; but my father took me one evening to see an immersion and upon reaching home I asked him if it would be necessary to go down into that pool of water in

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order to be a Baptist preacher. He replied that it would, and it is a tradition in our family that I never afterward would say that I was going to be a Baptist preacher.

My second ambition was to be a farmer and raise pumpkins, and there are doubtless a great many people who are glad that I now have a chance to realize my second ambition without having my agricultural pursuits interrupted by official cares.

My third ambition was to be a lawyer. When I was a small boy I used to go to the court-house and sitting upon the steps leading up to the bench upon which my father then sat I listened to the trial of cases and looked forward to the time when I would be practising at the bar. That ambition guided me through my boyhood days and my

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college days. I studied law, was admitted to the bar, practised for a while in Illinois and then located in Nebraska. In removing from Illinois to Nebraska I was influenced solely by professional reasons. I need not give you any further assurance that I did not move to Nebraska for political reasons than to say that at the time of my location in Lincoln, Nebraska was republican, the congressional district was republican, the county was republican, the city was republican, the ward was republican, and the voting precinct was republican—and to tell the truth about it, there has not been as much change in that respect as there ought to have been, considering the intelligence of the people among whom I have been living.

I entered politics by accident and remained there by design. I was

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nominated for Congress in 1890 because it was not thought possible for a democrat to be elected. I was young and new in the State. If it had been a democratic district the honor would have gone to some one older, of longer residence and more deserving. A republican paper said next morning after the convention that a confidence game had been played upon a young man from Illinois and that he had been offered as a sacrifice upon the party altar because he had not been in the State long enough to know the political complexion of the district. My location in Nebraska was due to my acquaintance with a man whom I learned to know in college, and this acquaintance became more intimate because of a joke which I played upon him when we were students. Tracing it back, step

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by step, I said one evening in Baltimore that I was elected to Congress as a result of a joke that I played upon a friend in college. The gentleman who followed me said that that was nothing, and that he had known men to go to Congress as a result of a joke they had played upon an entire community.

My term in Congress brought me into contact with the great political and economic problems now demanding solution and I have never since that time been willing to withdraw myself from their study and discussion, and I offer no apology at this time for being interested in the science of government. It is a noble science, and one to which the citizen must give his attention. I have no patience with those who feel that they are too good to take part in politics.

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When I find a person who thinks that he is too good to take part in politics, I find one who is not quite good enough to deserve the blessings of a free government. Parents sometimes warn their sons to keep out of politics; mothers sometimes urge their sons to avoid politics lest they become contaminated by it. This ought not to be. It used to be the boast of the Roman matron that she could rear strong and courageous sons for the battle-field. In this age when the victories of peace are no less renowned than the victories of war, and in this country where every year brings a conflict, it ought to be the boast of American mothers that they can rear strong and courageous sons who can enter politics without contamination and purify politics rather than be corrupted by politics.

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But while my plans and ambitions have been changed by circumstances, I trust that my ideals of citizenship have not changed, and that I may be permitted to share with you an ideal that will place above the holding of any office, however great, the purpose to do what we can to make this country so good that to be a private citizen in the United States will be greater than to be a king in any other nation.

The ideal dominates the life, determines the character and fixes a man's place among his fellows. I shall mention some instances that have come under my own observation and as I speak of them I am sure you will recall instances within your knowledge where the ideal has in an open and obvious way controlled the life. I have known laboring men

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who, working for wages, have been able to support themselves, acquire a library and become acquainted with the philosophers, orators and historians of the world, and many of them have laid aside enough to gratify their ambition for a college course. What enables them to resist temptation and press forward to the consummation of a high purpose? It is their ideal of life. As I have gone through the country I have found here and there young men—sometimes the sons of farmers, sometimes the sons of mechanics, sometimes the sons of merchants, sometimes the sons of professional men—young men who have one characteristic in common, namely, that they have been preparing for service. They have learned that service is the measure of greatness, and tho they have not al-

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ways known just what line of work they were to follow, they have been preparing themselves for service, and they will be ready when the opportunity comes.

I know a young man who came to this country when he was eighteen years of age; he came to study our institutions and learn of our form of government, and now he has returned with a determination to be helpful to his people. I watched him for five years, and I never knew a man who more patiently or perseveringly pursued a high ideal. You might have offered him all the money in the treasury to have become a citizen of the United States, but it would have been no temptation to him. He would have told you that he had a higher ideal than to stand guard over a chest of money. His desire was to be use-

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ful to his country, and I have no doubt that he will be.

I was passing through Chicago some months ago, and, having a few hours to spare between trains, went out to Hull House, that splendid institution presided over by Jane Addams. I was surprised to learn of the magnitude of its work. I learned that more than five thousand names were enrolled upon the books of the association; that mothers left their babes there to be cared for when they went out to work, that little children received kindergarten instruction there, that young women found a home there, and young men a place where they could meet and commune free from the temptations of city life. More than twenty young men and young women give their entire time to the work of this association with-

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out compensation. Similar institutions will be found in nearly all of the larger cities and in many of the smaller ones, and in these institutions young men and young women, many of them college graduates, give a part or all of their time to gratuitous work. Why? Because somehow or somewhere they have taken hold of an ideal of life that lifts them above the sordid selfishness that surrounds them and makes them find a delight in bringing life and light and hope into homes that are dark. The same can be said of the thousands who labor in institutions of charity, mercy and benevolence.

In December, 1903, it was my good fortune to spend a day in the country home of the great philosopher of Russia. You know something of the history of Tolstoy, how he was born

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in the ranks of the nobility and how with such a birth he enjoyed every possible social distinction. At an early age he became a writer of fiction and his books have given him a fixt place among the novelists of the century. "He sounded all the depths and shoals of honor" in so far as honor could be derived from society or from literature, and yet, at the age of forty-eight, life seemed so vain and empty to him that he wanted to die. They showed me a ring in the ceiling of a room in his house from which he had planned to hang himself. And what deterred him? A change came in his ideals. He was born again, he became a new creature, and for more than twenty-eight years, clad in the garb of a peasant and living the simple life of a peasant, he has been preaching unto all

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the world a philosophy that rests upon the doctrine "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself." There is scarcely a civilized community in all the world where the name of Tolstoy is not known and where his influence has not been felt. He has made such an impression upon the heart of Russia and the world that while some of his books are refused publication in Russia and denied importation from abroad, and while people are prohibited from circulating some of the things that he writes, yet with a million men under arms the government does not lay its hands upon Tolstoy.

Let me add another illustration of a complete change in the ideal. In college I became acquainted with a student fourteen years my senior, and

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learned the story of his life. For some years he was a tramp, going from place to place without fixt purpose or habitation. One night he went by accident into a place where a revival was in progress, and he was not only converted but he decided to be a minister. I watched him as he worked his way through college, doing chores to earn his board and lodging, working on Saturdays in a store, and during the summer months at anything he could find to do. I watched him as he worked his way through the theological seminary, and then I watched him as he preached the Gospel until he died, and I never knew a man more consecrated to a high purpose. The change came in his life as in the twinkling of an eye. Could anything be more marvelous?

Some have rejected the Christian

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religion because they could not understand its mysteries and its miracles.

I have been reading a book recently on materialism and I have been interested in the attempt of the author to drive God out of the universe. He searches for Him with a microscope, and, because he can not find him with a microscope, he declares that he is too small to see; then he searches for Him with a telescope, and, because he can not see Him among the stars or beyond, he declares that there is no God—that matter and force alone are eternal, and that force acting on matter has produced the clod, the grass that grows upon the clod, the beast that feeds upon the grass, and man, the climax of created things. I have tried to follow his reasoning and have made up my mind that it requires more faith to accept the scientific

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demonstrations of materialism than to accept any religion I have ever known. As I tried to follow his syllogisms I was reminded of the reasoning of a man who conceived the idea that a grasshopper heard through its legs. But he would not accept it without demonstration, so he took a grasshopper, put it on a board and knocked on the board. The grasshopper jumped, and this he regarded as evidence that the sound traveled along the board till it reached the grasshopper's legs and then went up through the legs to the center of life. But he was not willing to accept it upon affirmative proof alone; he insisted upon proving it negatively, so he pulled the legs off the grasshopper and put it on the board and rapped again. As the grasshopper did not

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jump, he was convinced that it heard through its legs.

I say I was reminded of the grasshopper scientist when I read the arguments employed to prove that there is no God, no spiritual life.

In the journey from the cradle to the grave we encounter nothing so marvelous as that change in the ideals which works a revolution in the life itself, and there is nothing in materialism to explain this change.

It is of vital importance to the individual what his ideal is, and it also makes a difference to those about him. If you have a man working for you, it makes a great deal of difference to you whether he is watching you all the time to see that you give him the best possible pay for his work, or watching himself a little to see that he gives you the best

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possible work for his pay. And we are all working for somebody. Instead of working by the day and receiving our pay at night, or instead of working by the month and receiving our pay at the end of the month, we may be in independent business and receiving a compensation fixt by competition, but if we are not living a life of idleness we must be working for somebody, and it makes a material difference to society whether we are simply bent upon absorbing as much as possible from the world, or are trying to give a dollar's worth of service for a dollar's worth of pay. There are some who regard it as a discreditable thing to engage in productive labor. There are places where they count with pride the number of generations between themselves and honest toil. If I can leave

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but one thought with the young men who honor me by their presence on this occasion, let it be this thought—that we must all have food and clothing and shelter, and must either earn these things or have them given to us, and any self-respecting young man ought to be ashamed to sponge upon the world for his living and not render unto the world valuable service in return.

Sometimes you meet a man who boasts that he is “self-made,” that he did it all himself, that he owes no man anything. When I hear of a man boasting of his independence I feel like cross-examining him. We owe a great deal to environment. I was going along by the side of the court-house in Chicago one wintry day when I was in law school and saw some little boys gambling with

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their pennies in a warm corner by the building. A question arose in my mind, namely, why these little fellows were born and reared amid an environment that gave them no higher ideals of life, while so many in Chicago and in the country at large were born amid a more favorable environment. The scene made an impression upon my memory, and when I hear a man boasting that he owes no one anything, I feel like asking him whether he has paid back the debt he owes to father and mother, teacher and seer. Whether he has paid back the debt he owes to the patriots who with blood and sacrifice purchased the liberties which we now enjoy. We have received so much from the generations past and from those about us that, instead of boasting of what we have done, we ought

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to learn humility and be content if at the end of life we can look back over the years and be assured that we have given to the world a service equal in value to that which we have received.

There is abroad in the land a speculative spirit that is doing much harm. Instead of trying to earn a living, young men are bent on making a fortune. Not content with the slow accumulations of honest toil, they are seeking some short cut to riches, and are not always scrupulous about the means employed. The “get-rich-quick” schemes that spring up and swindle the public, until they are discovered and driven out, prey upon the speculative spirit and find all their victims among those who are trying to get something for nothing.

What we need to-day is an ideal of life that will make people as anxious

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to render full service as they are to draw full pay—an ideal that will make them measure life by what they bestow upon their fellows and not by what they receive.

Not only must the individual have an ideal, but we must have ideals as groups of individuals and in every department of life. We have our domestic ideals. Whether a marriage is happy or not depends not so much upon the size of the house or the amount of the income, as upon the ideals with which the parties enter marriage. If two people contract marriage like some people trade horses—each one trying to get the better of the bargain—it is not certain that the marriage will be a happy one. In fact, the man who cheats in a horse trade has at least one advantage over the man who cheats in

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matrimony. The man who cheats in a horse trade may console himself with the thought that he may never see again the person whom he has cheated. Not so fortunate is the man who cheats in marriage. He not only sees daily the person whom he has cheated, but he is sometimes reminded of it—and it is just as bad if the cheating is done by the other side. Americans sometimes have cause to blush when they read of some of the international marriages discuss in the papers. I speak not now of those cases where love leaps across the ocean and binds two hearts—there are such cases and they are worthy of a blessing. But I speak rather of those commercial transactions which are, by courtesy, called marriages, where some young woman in this country trades a fortune that she never

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earned to a broken-down prince in another country for a title that he never earned, and they call it a fair exchange. I have sometimes thought that it might be worth while to establish papers in the centers of the old world to tell the people of our real marriages, so that they would not misunderstand us.

There is an American ideal of domestic life. When two persons, drawn together by the indissoluble ties of love, enter marriage, each one contributing a full part and both ready to share life's struggles and trials as well as its victories and its joys—when these, mutually helpful and mutually forbearing, start out to build an American home it ought to be the fittest earthly type of heaven.

In business it is necessary to have an ideal. It is as impossible to build

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a business without an ideal as it is to build a house without a plan. Some think that competition is so sharp now that it is impossible to be strictly honest in business; some think that it is necessary to recommend a thing, not as it is, but as the customer wants it to be. There never was a time when it was more necessary than it is to-day that business should be built upon a foundation of absolute integrity.

In the professions, also, an ideal is necessary. Take the medical profession for illustration. It is proper that the physician should collect money from his patients for he must live while he helps others to live, but the physicians who have written their names high upon the scroll of fame have had a higher ideal than the making of money. They have had a

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passion for the study of their profession; they have searched diligently for the hidden causes of disease and the remedies therefor and they have found more delight in giving to the world some discovery of benefit to the race than they have found in all the money they have collected from their patients.

And the lawyer; has he ideals? Yes. And I suppose the ideals of lawyers vary as much as the ideals in any other profession. The lawyer's ideals have an influence upon his character. He can not persistently defeat justice, or even ignore it, without a certain lowering of his manhood, while conscientious search for justice increases his power of discernment and adds to his moral strength.

Then, too, a lawyer's influence with

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the judge depends largely upon his reputation for honesty. Of course, a lawyer can fool a judge a few times and lead him into a hole, but after a while the judge learns to know the lawyer, and then he can not follow the lawyer's arguments because he is looking for the hole all the time, which he knows is somewhere and which he is trying to avoid. I need not remind you that nothing is so valuable to a jury lawyer as a reputation that will make the jurors believe that he will not under any circumstances misstate a proposition of law or of evidence. And so I might take up each occupation, calling and profession, and show that the ideal controls the life, determines the character and establishes a man's place among his fellows.

But let me speak of the ideals of a

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larger group. What of our political ideals? The party as well as the individual must have its ideals, and we are far enough from the election to admit that there is room in all parties for the raising of the party ideal. How can a person most aid his party? Let us suppose that one is passionately devoted to his party and anxious to render it the maximum of service; how can he render this service? By raising the ideal of his party. If a young man asks me how he can make a fortune in a day, I can not tell him. If he asks how he can become rich in a year, I know not what to answer him, but I can tell him that if he will locate in any community and for twenty-five years live an honest life, an industrious life, a useful life, he will make friends and fasten them to him with hooks of

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steel; he will make his impress upon the community and the chances are many to one that before the quarter of a century has elapsed his fellows will call upon him to act for them and to represent them in important matters.

And so if you ask me how we can win an election this year, I do not know. If you ask me how we can insure a victory four years from now, I can not tell, but I do know that the party which has the highest ideals and that strives most earnestly to realize its ideals will ultimately dominate this country and make its impress upon the history of the nation. As it is more important that the young man shall know how to build character and win a permanent success than that he shall know how to become rich in a day, so it is more

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important that we shall know how to contribute to the permanent influence of a party than it is that we be able to win a temporary victory or distribute the spoils of office after a successful campaign.

The country is suffering to-day from a demoralization of its ideals. Instead of measuring people by the manhood or womanhood they manifest, we are too prone to measure them by the amount of money they possess, and this demoralization has naturally and necessarily extended to politics. Instead of asking "Is it right?" we are tempted to ask "Will it pay?" and "Will it win?" As a result the public conscience is becoming seared and the public service debauched. We find corruption in elections and corruption in office. Men sell their votes, councilmen sell their

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influence, while State legislators and federal representatives turn the government from its legitimate channels and make it a private asset in business. It is said that in some precincts in Delaware a majority of the voters have been paid for their votes. Governor Garvin of Rhode Island calls attention to the corruption in that State; there is corruption in Connecticut, in New Jersey and in Pennsylvania. I learned of an instance in New York where a farmer with a quarter-section of land demanded a dollar and a half for his vote, and I learned of another instance in West Virginia where a man came in fourteen miles from the country the day before election to notify the committee that he would not vote the next day unless he received a dollar. In some places I found that democrats

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were imitating republican methods. They excused it by saying that they were fighting the devil with fire. This is no excuse. It is poor policy to fight the devil with fire. He knows more about fire than you do and does not have to pay so much for fuel. I was assured that the democrats did not buy votes exactly like the republicans. I was assured that the democrats only bought votes when they found some democrat who was being tempted more than he could bear, and that they only used money to fortify the virtue of the democrat for fear he might yield to temptation and become vicious.

How are we to stop this corruption? Not by going into the market and bidding against our opponents, but by placing against money something stronger than money. And

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what is stronger than money? A conscience is stronger than money. A conscience that will enable a man to stand by a stake and smile while the flames consume him is stronger than money, and we must appeal to the conscience—not to a democratic conscience or to a republican conscience, but to an American conscience and to a Christian conscience, and place this awakened conscience against the onflowing tide of corruption in the United States.

We must have parties in this country. Jefferson said that there were naturally two parties in every country—a democratic party and an aristocratic party (and he did not use the word “democratic” in a partisan sense, for at that time the party which we now call democratic was called the republican party). Jef-

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erson said that a democratic party would naturally draw to itself those who believe in the people and trust them, while an aristocratic party would naturally draw to itself those who do not believe in or trust the people. Jefferson was right. Go into any country in Europe, and you will find a party of some name that is trying to increase the participation of the people in the government, and you will also find a party of some name which is obstructing every step toward popular government. We have the same difference in this country, but the democratic spirit is broader here than any party. Wherever the question has been clearly presented and on the one side there was an attempt to carry the government nearer to the people and on the other an effort to carry the

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government further from the people, popular government has always won. Let me illustrate. The Australian ballot is intended to protect the citizen in his right to vote, and thus give effect to the real wishes of the people, and when this reform was proposed it swept the country without regard to the party in power in the various States. Take the demand for the election of senators by the people; upon what does it rest? Upon the belief that the people have the right to and the capacity for self-government. The sentiment in favor of this reform has grown until a resolution proposing a constitutional amendment has passed the Lower House of Congress four times—twice when the house was democratic and twice when it was republican. This reform is sure to come, because the

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people believe in self-government, and they will in time insist upon making the government conform to their belief.\*

The initiative and referendum involve the same principles. The initiative describes the process by which the people compel the submission of a question upon which they desire to vote, and the referendum describes the process by which they act upon a question submitted. In each new charter the power of the people is increased. Limitations are placed upon legislative power and new questions are submitted to a popular vote. It is now necessary almost everywhere to submit to the people of a city the question of issuing bonds. The movement in favor

\* This reform has since been accomplished by the adoption of a constitutional amendment.

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of submitting franchises also is an irresistible one, and the time will come when it will be impossible for councilmen to sell franchises in return for money paid to themselves.

Switzerland is probably the most democratic country in the world. There the initiative and referendum are employed by both the federal government and by the local subdivisions, and the government is completely responsive to the will of the people.

In order to formulate a party ideal, we must have a theory of government as a basis, and in this country the fundamental principle of government is that the people have a right to have what they want in legislation. I made this statement in a lecture in Michigan and one of the audience took issue with me. He

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said that I ought to amend the statement and say that the people have a right to have what they want, *provided they want what is right.* I asked him who would decide the question of right. And he had to admit that, at last, the decision lay with the people. Constitutions place limitations upon legislatures and upon the people themselves, but the constitutions are made by the people and can be changed by the people. The only escape from the rule of the majority is to be found in the rule of the minority, but if a majority make mistakes, would not a minority also? Mistakes made by a majority will be corrected when they are discovered, but mistakes made by a minority may not be corrected if the mistakes are pecuniarily advantageous to those in power. The revolutions that have

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from time to time shaken the world have been caused largely by the refusal of the minority to correct mistakes beneficial to those who make the mistakes but injurious to the people at large. Bearing in mind the right of the people to deliberately fix the means by which they will express themselves, and their right to place limitations upon themselves, so that they can not act hastily or under a sudden impulse, I repeat that the people have a right to have what they want in government. If they want a high tariff, they have a right to it; if they want a low tariff, they have a right to that. They have a right to make tariff laws and to repeal them. They have a right to the gold standard if they want it, and they have a right to the double standard if they desire that, or if they prefer

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they can demonetize both gold and silver and substitute some other kind of money. If gold and silver furnish too much money, they can strike down one; if the remaining metal still furnishes too much, they can strike that down and substitute something scarcer. Ever since the discovery of radium, of which it is said there are but two pounds in the world, I have been fearful that an attempt would be made to make it the standard money of the country. But if the people decide to demonetize both gold and silver and substitute radium I will still insist that they have a right to do it. And, then, if they decide to give Morgan one pound and Rockefeller the other, I shall still stand with the people and watch Rockefeller and Morgan while they use the money.

## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

The people have a right to have trusts if they want them. They have a right to have one trust, a hundred trusts or a thousand, and they also have a right to make a private monopoly impossible.

If the people have a right to have what they want, then the duty of the party is plain. It is to present to the people a code of principles and policies to be acted upon by them. Who can defend the practising of deception upon the voters? Who can justify the winning of a victory by false pretense? Who can excuse a fraud upon the people? No one can defend a party ideal that does not require honesty in party contests. The policy of the party must be determined by the voters of the party, and he must have a low conception of political ethics who would seek by stealth

## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

to give to the minority of the party the authority that belongs to the majority. And so he must have a low conception of political ethics who would seek to secure for a minority of the people the authority that belongs to a majority. I want my party to write an honest platform, dealing candidly with the questions at issue; I want it to nominate a ticket composed of men who conscientiously believe in the principles of the party as enunciated, and then I want the party to announce to the country "These are our principles; these are our candidates. Elect them and they will carry out the principles for which they stand; they will not under any circumstances betray the trust committed to their keeping."

This is the ideal that the demo-

## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

cratic party ought to have and it is an ideal high enough for every party.

There is this difference between the ideal and other things of value, namely, that an ideal can not be patented or copyrighted. We often see things that we can not hope to possess, but there is no ideal, however high, that can not be ours if we desire it. The highest ideal of human life that this world has ever known was that presented to mankind by the Man of Galilee, but it was an ideal within the comprehension of the fishermen of his day, and the Bible says of Him that the common people heard Him gladly. So it is with a high party ideal. It can be comprehended by all the members of the party, and it can be adopted by every party. If we can fight out political battles upon this plane there is no humiliation about

## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

defeat. I have passed through two presidential campaigns, and many have rejoiced over my defeats, but if events prove that my defeats have been good for this country, I shall rejoice over them myself more than any opponent has rejoiced. And when I say this I am not unselfish, for it is better for me that my political opponents should bring good to my country than that I should by any mistake of mine bring evil.

Not only must the party have an ideal, but the nation must also have its ideal, and it is the ideal of this nation that has made it known throughout the world. You will find people in foreign lands who do not know our population or the number of acres under our flag. You will find people who do not know how many cattle we raise or how much

## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

corn or cotton we export, but you will not find people anywhere who have not some conception of the nation's ideal. This ideal has been a light shining out unto all the world and its rays have illumined the shores of every land. We have boasted of this ideal in the past, and it must not be lowered now. We followed this ideal in dealing with Cuba. It was my good fortune to be in Cuba on the day when the formal transfer took place, and I never was more proud of my nation in my life than I was on the 20th day of May, 1902, when this great republic rose superior to a great temptation, recognized the inalienable rights of the people of Cuba and secured to them the fruits of a victory for which they had struggled and sacrificed for more than a generation. We hauled down the

## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

flag, it is true, and in its place they raised the flag of the Cuban republic, but when we lowered the flag we raised it higher than it ever had been before, and when we brought it away we left it enshrined in the hearts of a grateful people.

A nation, like an individual, is strong in proportion as it possesses virtue, and weak if it lacks it. Character is the power of endurance in the group as well as in the person. The nations that have fallen have decayed morally before they have failed physically. If our nation is to endure, it must stand for eternal principles and clothe itself in their strength. There are some who say that we must now have the largest navy in the world to terrorize other nations, and make them respect us. But if we make our navy the largest

## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

in the world, other nations will increase their navies because we have increased ours, and then we will have to increase ours again, because they have increased theirs, and they will have to increase theirs again because we have increased ours—and there is no limit to this rivalry except the limit of the power of the people to bear the burdens of taxation. There is a better, a safer and a less expensive plan. Instead of trying to make our navy the largest in the world, let us try to make our government the best government on earth. Instead of trying to make our flag float everywhere, let us make it stand for justice wherever it floats—for justice between man and man, for justice between nation and nation, and for humanity always. And then the people of the world will learn to

## THE VALUE OF AN IDEAL

know and revere that flag, because it will be their protection as well as ours. And then if any king raises his hand against our flag the opprest people of his own land will rise up and say to him "Hands off! That flag stands for our rights as well as the rights of the American people." It is possible to make our flag represent such an ideal. We shall not fulfil our great mission, we shall not live up to our high duty, unless we present to the world the highest ideals in individual life, in domestic life, in business life, in professional life, in political life — and the highest national ideal that the world has ever known.



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